

Golden Sun : The Anemos

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Summary: How can you stop the 6 most powerful Adepts in history? How can you counter the ability to see the future, and fly? How can the power of pure Alchemy be stopped from destroying us all? UPDATED! What is psynergy? How will everyone react to this new quest?

***Chapter 1*: Prologue : Catalyst**

The Anemos were a legendary tribe of Jupiter Adepts. They were well known for amazing Psynergy powers, such as being able to see the future as well as the ability to fly. It is therefore probable that they were an advanced civilization from Weyard's ancient past similar to the Mercury-aligned Lemuria. Legends state that the Anemos' city used to be located near Contigo, where there is currently a large crater. Little is known of their fate, except for speculation and the stories of the Contigo. What remains of the Anemos city is a large ruin called Anemos Sanctum, located near the large to the lore of Contigo, the Anemos suffered a great disaster. The event may be related to the seal placed on Alchemy. To preserve its culture, the Anemos performed an amazing feat: they lifted their city into the sky. Some believed that the city (specifically its rocky underside) became the moon.

Taken from the History of Weyard, author unknown

The sun rose. Sunlight immediately illuminated the old man's one-room home. As the sun continued its slow yet deliberate ascension, its golden rays began to coat his face, making him look decades younger. His face was visibly aged, but not so much. His wrinkles were distinct, but were stretched tautly over his face. They were like rivers, connecting and splitting apart whimsically. His eyes were deep blue, the same color as the ocean which surrounded the island he and he alone lived on. His blonde hair was like the rugged grass of the various pastures that populated Weyard, and reflected his personality: tough, due to the many wildfires encountered, yet peaceful.

Eventually, the sun striking against his closed eyes managed to awake him. He slowly sat up in his bed, and looked out the window across from him. The day was beautiful, as are most of the days in the Great Eastern Sea. The old man stood up and stretched. He felt, in the inner depths of his being, that something was different about this day. He felt strangely energized, as if the very air around him was ignited with psynergy. He walked out of his house into the open air and took a deep breath. Then he turned around.

A golden pillar illuminated the sky far to the east. It was many, many miles away, yet it was still clearly visible.

At first, the old man didn't believe what he saw. He knew that the lighthouses were being lit one by one, but could it have been completed so soon? Could the catalyst for his plan really have appeared so quickly?

There is...one way to find out... he thought apprehensively. He walked out of his home and to the edge of the small island, allowing his bare feet to stand in the rising and falling tide. He took a deep breath, and called upon the psynergy within him. There was a wind, within him. He took control of the energy, as if he had it grasped in his hand, and focused.

He began to levitate.

In the back of his mind, a feeling of elation grew like a balloon, but he didn't allow his concentration to be broken. He poured out more energy, and he lifted further off the ground. Soon, he was 10 feet in the air. A smile spread across his face, and he took off.

He soared like an eagle, following no distinct pattern. He flew above the palm trees surrounding his home, and circled

the island. It had been decades since he last took flight. He could feel his strength leaving him, but the excitement of flying overcame his caution. He stopped midair, and rose straight into the air. He went higher and higher, and he could feel the temperature dropping. After a minute, he stopped and looked down at the land around him.

Weyard was beautiful.

He could see as far as the Apojii Islands, and the top of the Gaia Falls. The water was crystal clear and glinted. He could see the coasts of Angara and Gondowan. He hung in the air and simply looked for a few long minutes.

But, suddenly, a strong pain overtook him. It felt as if an arrow had been broken off inside of his chest. *My psynergy... no...I still have sufficient psynergy left...then it must be...*

He abruptly realized what was happening, and took off towards the ground, headfirst. As he descended, he could feel the pain dulling, as it was being replaced with a feeling of weakness. His arms and legs began to feel heavy, and his eyelids drooped. Breathing became a difficult task. He saw spots of blackness in front of his eyes. His life was slowly being extinguished.

As he approached land, he attempted to slow down, but it wasn't quick enough; he crashed painfully into the sand. He gasped for air and spit out grains of sand as he crawled towards his home. His sight was almost entirely gone now; he could only see vague shapes. He knelt in the center of his cottage and opened up the floor with a handle concealed by a rug. He reached in, groped around, and pulled out a half-full bottle of thick red liquid. Wasting no time, he quickly pulled out its cork and gulped down the bottle, giving out a satisfied sigh after he emptied its contents. For a moment,

nothing happened. Then, it felt as if the liquid was leaving his stomach and spreading out through his body. It went from his fingertips to the bottom of his feet, and his sight quickly returned to normal. The wrinkles on his face slowly filled, and after a moment he appeared to be around the age of 30, as opposed to looking 60. He took in a few deep breaths, allowing the small amount of panic that was building up within him to subside.

He stood up and walked outside. The Golden Sun had arrived. He was back at full strength. It felt as if it was a new beginning. *A new beginning indeed...* He sat in the sand and focused his energy once more. Sending a message such a far distance is no mundane task, but it was doable. He concentrated all his energy and looked to the moon. The psynergy was visibly surrounding him now, like a strong wind. His entire being was intent on relaying this message, on these three words:

It has begun.

***Chapter 2*: Chapter 1 : Revelation**

Author's Note: Welcome to the first (official) chapter, everyone!! This one is pretty long, which should hopefully make up for the prologue, a short chapter. This one will basically reveal the main quest (but still leave a few questions unanswered) and also reveal the story behind where the Wise One came from. Hopefully it doesn't sound too off-the-wall.

Keep reviewing! The only way I can make my story better is by reading all of your reviews. I can guarantee I won't get mad, no matter how destructive/constructive your review is. As long as there's one person out there who enjoys my work, I'll keep writing. Cheers!

Isaac slumbered. It was the first time in months that he was able to sleep in a bed without fear. During their quest, every night he laid his head down to rest, a different thought manifested itself. One day he would think of Saturos and Menardi. Who was he, a mere 17-year-old Adept, to decide they deserved to die? How could he live with himself when, as ruthless as they were, the pair only wanted to save their homeland from disappearing into oblivion? On other days, he became afraid of his mission. How could a mere 17-year-old Adept possible embark on a quest to save the entire world, with millions populating its surface? Some nights, he even felt hatred for the Wise One creeping up his soul.

And, although Isaac was deeply distressed by it, he began to hate Felix. What did Felix hope to accomplish, abandoning his friends to do what he felt 'necessary', and essentially

labeling Isaac and Garet's lives meaningless? Did Felix think he was the only one 'worthy' enough to risk his life for Vale, and Weyard? Soon, however, Isaac understood; Felix was no different than himself, in the fact that he didn't want to involve anyone in his quest whom he felt would be endangered unnecessarily. This led to more confusion for Isaac, however, as he found this ideal to be slightly arrogant, considering Isaac, Garet, Ivan, and Mia had already overcome the same adversity as Felix's group. Several times, Isaac almost shared these feelings with his party members, but decided against it, concluding that their mission didn't need any more complications.

And so, Isaac slept on, no longer perturbed by any worries or fears. He began to dream, peacefully. He was walking on a bridge, surrounded by all his djinn. Isaac looked down, and saw white. There was no sky, no surrounding environment: just him, his djinn, the bridge...and white blankness. Isaac was slightly bemused, but still at ease. It was as if, deep down, he knew the exact reason why he was there.

He walked energetically for some unknown time (it could have been, minutes, hours, days, years, centuries..). Finally, a brown wooden door appeared almost instantly before him. He placed his hand on the brass doorknob, twisted, and, not stopping for a moment to question anything that was happening, pulled.

The door opened to reveal an expansive, grassy field. He looked up to see the sky, a calming blue, with milky white clouds slowly moving across it. The sun (*The sun? Isaac thought, perplexed*) was brilliant, and the air around him was very warm, almost to an uncomfortable degree. He looked around again and realized his djinn had disappeared.

Isaac's eyes returned to the field. There was a single large tree on top of a grassy hill, with what seemed to be a table with two chairs at each end underneath it. He paused for a moment and walked toward it, the sun glaring at him. As he got closer, he saw a man sitting in one of the chairs. He appeared to be somewhat older than Isaac, with a white linen shirt and some loose green pants that blew with the wind. His hair, a smooth tan, was in a ponytail. He was staring off into the field, thinking so deeply Isaac could practically read his thoughts in his furrowed brow. As Isaac drew nearer, the man turned to face him.

"Isaac," he said, as if he was a proud father acknowledging his son. "Sit", he said as he motioned to the seat across from him.

Isaac sat down. He waited uncomfortably for the man to speak, as he was beaming at him. After a minute, Isaac decided to open his mouth.

"So...what is all this?"

The man slapped the table heartily, making Isaac jump. "Why, my dear Isaac, you can consider this your victory interview!"

Isaac stared at the man, clueless, so he elaborated. "Well, don't you remember the mission I entrusted to you? Almost a year ago?"

Isaac continued to look clueless, and the man smiled. "Of course. You can't recognize me." He stood up from the table. "Perhaps this will allow you to understand."

The man opened his mouth and spoke: "Isaac, you *must* complete this quest." Only, it wasn't his voice. The voice he used sounded ethereal, above understanding. The voice

sounded like it could control Alchemy itself. It was complex, as if 1000 people were speaking at once, and ignited a feeling of awe in Isaac's soul. The pool of psynergy within him was excited by this voice, and even the tree above them seemed to shudder. Isaac had only heard one voice like this in his life, and it was unmistakable where it came from. However, the voice wasn't the main reason he realized who the man was. The words he spoke were the words that motivated him for months; they were the words he recalled whenever he struggled to prevent (or help) the lighthouses being lit.

"Wise One...", Isaac said quietly.

The man smiled. "Not quite," he said in his normal voice. "But close enough. There are many things you deserve to know, Isaac, so I believe I'll begin by explaining who I am."

Isaac sat, a million questions trying to force their way through his mouth, but he held them back.

"It's true that my identity could be considered 'The Wise One', although that would only be part accurate. You see, Isaac," said the man as he sat down and leaned in, with his arms resting on the table, "the Wise One is merely the result of a melding of 294 Adept's psynergies and souls, along with a considerable amount of pure alchemy being used as glue."

Isaac's jaw dropped slightly, and he was about to bombard the man with questions, but the man held up his hand. "Be at ease. The story I'm about to tell you should explain everything..." He paused and took a sip of water from a glass Isaac hadn't noticed before. "As well as reveal the mission you must embark upon next," he added, his voice dropping from its cheery tone to a much more dire one.

Isaac narrowed his eyes at the stranger, but allowed him to continue.

"As I'm sure you've already learned at some point in your quest, there were once two tribes on Weyard, the Anemos and the Shamans." Isaac nodded, and the man continued. "The tribes fought bitterly. The Anemos were small in number, but immensely powerful Adepts. The Shaman's weren't as in-tune with psynergy, but made up for it with numbers and the ability to smith very unique and powerful weapons. In fact, they were the first tribe to forge steel." The man shuddered. "It was one of--no, *the* deadliest, bloodiest war in Weyard's history. I was alive during that time..." the man said solemnly, and Isaac suppressed a gasp of surprise as he continued. "When I was 16, I was selected to join the war. For 2 years, I served as a medic and record keeper, while I underwent intermediate weapon and combat training. Then, on the eve of my 18th birthday, I entered the frontline for the first time..."

The man leaned back in his seat, his eyes looking at a place far away.

"It was the worst day of my life. I was in one of the larger squadrons, a squadron that would be sent to the middle of the fight later in the battle. It was the army's policy to try and keep the young, new soldiers alive for as long as possible," he explained. "I...I remember walking through the chaos, spells and arrows being fired around me, men crying as their lives faded. I didn't know what to do. It was like watching the world end and not knowing how to stop it." The man paused again, obviously moved by his memories. Isaac waited patiently until he continued once more. "Then, completely by surprised, I was hit with a Wind Slash from behind. Seeing as it was my first instance being struck by psynergy, the pain was enormous," said the man as he

smiled dryly. "However, my fear of dying on that field, in that hellish place, was far greater than my pain. So...I kicked the Adept who struck me in the crotch, and ran him through the stomach." Isaac tried to keep his expression blank, but the man was able to see through it. "Cowardice, I know," he said, laughing humorlessly. "I was terrorized that day, Isaac... looking back now, I see that war is by far the most dangerous plague to our society."

"The very next day, I deserted the army and fled home. My wounds were still grievous, and I had far from recovered. I collapsed near a lake, where I was found by a hermit. Ironically, the hermit was one of the Anemos, and his deep seated hatred for war led him to leaving his tribe, and living near a small lake on Atteka. It was with him where I first learned of the lighthouses, and the terrible, yet wondrous powers that lay within." He took another sip of water. "I began to study Jupiter psynergy, and after 2 years my ability was able to rival that of any Anemos Adept...a marvelous feat, no doubt. After my ability reached its apex, I was informed in detail of his plan to save...the whole of Weyard."

The man took another sip, as if he was casually talking about his prediction for next year's Colosso. Isaac tensed up, as he could feel in his soul the story he was hearing was one of the most important stories to ever be told.

The man continued: "The hermit, Aremos, and I, Aremis..."the man looked up, sensing Isaac's intrigued gaze. "Those names are words of the ancient Anemian language," he explained. "The language was lost hundreds of years before the war, in the dawn of man's creation. Aremos and Aremis are the names of two legendary Anemos warriors, who fought off invasion for 150 years."

Aremis paused for a moment, regaining his train of thought, and continued once again. "The hermit had spent 20 years constructing four orbs with the power to contain all the power of each of the lighthouses. It took an unimaginable amount of time, effort and psynergy. He would spend a week straight without food, water, or sleep, condensing all his psynergy into a stone from Mt. Aleph. Then, he would need to rest for a month. And he continued this process until he had 4 identical stones, one for each of the elements. These stones came to be known as the-

"The Elemental Stars," Isaac finished calmly.

Aremis nodded as he thoughtfully wiped the condensation off of his cool glass of water. "Yes...it took us about a year. We traveled from Atteka, which at that time, was still conjoined to the mainland, to each of the lighthouses, capturing their energy inside each of the Stars. We were careful to seal the Jupiter Lighthouse last, because we knew if we sealed it before we were ready to return, the Anemos' power would greatly diminish. If that happened, the war could've ended before we could get back and explain our deed, due to the Shamans successfully killing them off."

"There are dozens of encounters I could share with you about our quest. However, I believe they would best be shared another day." The man paused and thoughtfully smoothed his ponytail. "Once we returned, Aremos and I discovered something peculiar. The moment we sealed the final lighthouse, Jupiter's, the Anemos and Shamans had reached a truce. The reduction in their strength caused them to realize the futility of their war. The hermit and I were greatly relieved, but both of us knew there was more to be done, as we discussed during our travels. It was apparent to us that this could always happen again, if we didn't take some sort of proactive steps to prevent it. The hermit had a

plan, and although I wasn't told of it, I already anticipated it would contain some sort of divine foresight...the same foresight he used to predict that I would collapse near his home a year prior."

Isaac was listening, but in the back of his mind, he felt indifference. He did everything the Wise One instructed him to, and even continued on his quest once he realized he only knew half the story behind Alchemy's effect on the world. All he wanted now...*all* he wanted now was simple, boring, peace and relaxation. Not another epic quest to 'save the world'. Yet there was another feeling in the back of his mind. Isaac couldn't quite put his finger on it, and before he could complete his self-examination, Aremis spoke again.

"So, the hermit demanded the Anemos Council and the entire clan be summoned before him, so he could deliver his plans. On that day, I was standing next to him. I had already been accepted as an honorary Anemos member for my participation in sealing the lighthouses, and by extension, ending the war. The hermit opened his mouth and said the heaviest words I had ever heard." Aremis paused. Isaac could feel a sort of tension in the air as he finished his statement: "He wanted every single Anemos member to give up their lives for the sake of the world, and unite to form a sort of watchman. He wanted all of us—them—to combine our psynergy and souls into one entity, who would be able to prevent any war that could occur."

"Just imagine, Isaac, if the Wise One came to Vale and demanded that all of you do the same. Give up your lives for the world. Lose all feelings of emotion and love. Lose all thoughts, and all of your senses. Do you think Vale would accept this destiny?"

Isaac considered the question. It was far, far deeper than a simple yes or no. How would Gareth, Jenna, Felix, and the others react to such a proposal? Isaac didn't even know if he would be able to accept it.

Aremis interrupted Isaac's thoughts with a shocking statement: "Contrary to what you would think, Isaac, the Anemos were one-hundred percent willing to do this, with only a few, specifically six, dissenting. The clan was on the brink of extinction. There were exactly 300 of us, with most of the strong men killed in the war. It would take years, centuries for the clan to restore its previous glory. And seeing as the clan was so weak, it would be completely open to attacks by other clans and cities, who were greedy for the Anemos' secrets and treasures. The best way for the tribe to preserve its culture and live eternally was to follow through with Aremos' plan."

Isaac interrupted. "How? How could you possibly merge 300 people into one thing? That's contrary to all the laws of Alchemy I learned when I was younger..." Isaac's brain was overloaded. He had learned so much in such a short time, and he wasn't sure if he was even the right person to invest the secrets of Weyard into.

"Well, Isaac," said Aremis patiently, "it's actually simple. As I'm sure you know, when using the teleport spell, your body is broken down into pure psynergy." Isaac nodded, and he continued. "Well, we used a similar strategy. By using the Shaman's Rod, which we exchanged for the Hover Jade during our truce with them, we were able to break all of our bodies down to their simplest form. The Shaman's Rod is one of the two weapons forged in the history of man that has the ability to contain pure Alchemy. It enabled us to perform feats that no Adept could perform normally."

"Incredible," Isaac said softly.

Aremis nodded. "It was a very strange experience. Technically, all of our consciences exist within the stone you call the Wise One. Yet at the same time, we are all the same being."

"It was also a part of our plan to lift our entire main city near Contigo into the sky, to make sure that, in a safer time, it could be returned to earth, our culture completely preserved."

They sat in silence for a moment. Aremis wisely allowed Isaac to soak in all he had learned. It was a lot to digest, and even more to understand. Isaac finally looked up, and Aremis was surprised to see hardness in his eyes and in his voice.

"So, what the hell does this have to do with this second 'quest' that you're forcing me into? At least you have the courtesy to inform me the whole story before you send me trekking all over Weyard," Isaac said strongly.

Aremis remained calm. "I wish to apologize to you for that, Isaac, I—"

Isaac waved him off. "No," he said, more gently, "just tell me. What is it now that's putting us all in danger?"

Aremis took another sip of his water, with a noticeably distressed expression. "You see, Isaac...there were six of the Anemos who objected to our plan. Namely, the Council. They were also our six strongest. They...went up with the city. And I have reason to believe they are preparing to return."

"Huh?" Isaac interjected. *How could six people live in a city in the sky for hundred of years?* Isaac thought.

Aremis seemed to read his mind, for his response was, "Lemurian Draught. All that time ago, before Babi did it, a very, very large amount of it was stolen. Back then, it wasn't as large a problem, due to Alchemy being widespread, and the Draught being easily obtainable. But now, in retrospect, I know that those six are the ones who stole it."

"But how could you possibly know that they're coming? I mean—aren't they in the sky? Like you said?"

Aremis frowned. "Just one day ago...I heard a message. It was a very strong message; in fact, I wouldn't be surprised if young Ivan heard it as well. It was three simple words, directed towards our city in the sky. *'It has begun'*." Aremis said this word with what almost sounded like fear in his voice. *'It has begun'*, he repeated softly. "Isaac, I know not their intention, but they shall return. If I am to guess correctly, they'll be seeking revenge."

Isaac felt like pulling his hair out. Six Adepts of the strongest tribe in Weyard's history, coming to wreak havoc? It sounded like a challenge even greater than lighting the beacons of the Lighthouses. There was no fear in his heart, but a feeling of apprehension. How would Vale be completed? How would his parents take the news that, right after being united once again, their son would be leaving once more? And how many lives would be taken away?

"Why...me...?" Isaac said softly, not caring who heard him. "Why..."

Aremis' expression turned to one of sympathy. "I'm sorry, Isaac. It is my doing that got you involved in this. I...imbued you with a small percentage of power from the Golden Sun." Isaac looked up, shocked. Aremis nodded. "There is a small percentage of the Mars portion of the Golden Sun within

you. However, this won't make you half Mars Adept, half Venus Adept. I continued by converting all of that energy into Venus psynergy. You'll find you're more in-tune with Venus, specifically, the earth. Right now, you're the one who's best equipped to defeat the Anemos Council."

"What does that even mean," Isaac said. "More 'in-tune', what did you do, exactly?"

Aremis waved him off. "Isaac, my power is fading. You will wake up soon, for I can't stay in this dream forever. Just know that it will come in handy." Aremis stood up. "Before I go, I must definitively ask you: will you accept this quest?"

Isaac's first impulse was to say no. He thought of Jenna, Gareth, Felix, all of his friends (who would no doubt risk their lives beside him), all of Vale, and rejected the thought of leaving them. Of going once again to save millions he didn't even know.

Yet, there was something in him that stopped him. It was a feeling he had earlier in their conversation. He still didn't know what it was, but before Isaac could think about it, the words forced themselves out of his mouth:

"If it has to be done...I'll be the one to do it."

Aremis smiled a smile full of admiration. "Superb. You must prepare yourself, and, if you decide to bring them, you must prepare your friends. Tomorrow, I will appear to all of you at the bottom of Mt. Aleph. Do not be afraid, Isaac. I will assist you on this quest with all that I can provide. Farewell, for now."

Aremis turned and walked off the hill. He cast a final look at Isaac, and seemed to fade into the environment.

Did the Wise One really have the audacity to put him on another life-threatening quest, after he successfully completed one? He wanted to hate him, but he didn't. He wanted to hide away, to have no responsibility, to stay in Vale, get married, have children, live the normal life, and die there. But there was that feeling again. That feeling of calm. The feeling that forced him to accept and embark on this new adventure. It was now that Isaac realized what it was, as the grassy field and everything around him began to fade away.

He was ready.

***Chapter 3*: Chapter 2 : Dissonance**

OH MY GOD, AN UPDATE! Yeah, it's been ages, so shame on me. I had been really busy with school, and I didn't have enough interest in my story to force myself to buckle down and write. However, Dark Dawn is coming out (FUK YEA), so my interest has been renewed and reborn. I'd say a chapter every Tuesday is reasonable.

I wouldn't be surprised if my writing sounds rusty this chapter. Although it's been months, I kinda rushed this chapter out there, just so people would know that I was still alive. A quick shout-out to TommyDB, Hawki, Elrandir, Matiels, Supaku, and Artifex Haliband (your penname is in Latin, like mine *thumbs up*). I read all of your reviews, and appreciate the feedback. Hopefully the reviews will continue in abundance. I feel as though this chapter might be a bit too wordy in some places, so if it is, let it be known.

Cheers!

"Ugh, I just can't GET this!"

Garet leaned back in his chair and ran his fingers through his tall, fire-red hair. "It's just too complicated. Impossible to understand, I swear..."

Ivan looked up from his notes with a slight smile. "Oh, come on Garet. Just because it takes some brainpower, it doesn't automatically mean it's incomprehensible."

Garet stretched as he said, "Yeah, whatever. I keep on getting the feeling that Kraden likes you and Felix more than me. I mean, he won't even answer my questions! All I

ever get is 'Look in your notes, Gareth' or 'You've got to pay more attention, Gareth'."

"Maybe it's because you still don't know the basics yet," Ivan said gently.

Gareth took a large book from off of his lap and shut it indignantly. "Bleh, I've already experienced Alchemy firsthand, the hell do I need to keep studying it for? Here I am sitting in Kraden's home, reading this gibberish, when I could be helping the villagers rebuild Vale."

"Keep it down over there," said a voice. Gareth turned from the table in front of him to face Felix, who was seated in a large, polished wooden chair. He was sitting with one leg balancing on his other knee, a dusty-looking book on his lap. He spoke without looking up, "If you're frustrated, then try harder. You're not putting much effort into your studies."

"Look, *Felix*," Gareth said angrily, "I'm not as smart as you. It takes a lot of effort for me to do this stuff...Kraden says we need to understand Alchemy so we can prevent our world from falling into chaos, but..." Gareth trailed off and turned back to face the table in front of him. It was littered with sheets of parchment and books. "Maybe I'm just not good enough for all this," he said flatly.

Felix took a small rectangular sheet and placed it into the fold of his book, sighing heavily as he closed it. "Alright. I suppose I can help you, at least until you can continue on your own. What exactly is confusing you?"

Gareth turned his chair so he was facing Felix. "Everything, really...but for starters, I just don't get the idea that everything is made of psynergy. I mean," Gareth said, making vague gestures as he clearly struggled to find the right words, "I don't see an ordinary rock glowing with psynergy,

and if I break it in half, I still won't find any. Usually when an Adept powers up I notice it right away, but I can't sense an ounce of psynergy coming from the environment. It doesn't make any sense....come to think of it, what IS psynergy anyway?"

Felix was looking down at the ground, thinking so hard that Gareth could've sworn he saw his hair bristle. "You're farther behind than I thought," Felix said softly. He placed both of his feet on the wooden floor and leaned forward. "Alright Gareth, you've asked a very general question. But...I'll try to keep it succinct as possible."

Gareth glanced at Ivan and was somewhat surprised to see he was looking intently at Felix. *Looks like I'm not the only one looking for answers...*

"What is psynergy..." Felix repeated thoughtfully. "Psynergy is nothing but matter in the form of energy. That's all. It is the product of matter being broken down into its purest form. And when you break it down, you'll find that the matter is made up of four different types of psynergy. I... assume you know what the four types are," Felix said expectantly.

Gareth blinked. "Uh...that'd be fire, earth, wind, and water... right?"

Felix nodded satisfactorily. "Mmhm, although that's not totally correct. When you take psynergy and condense it considerably, you get something called hyle. Hyle is what makes up the matter, and with hyle, you can pretty much create anything you want. If we discovered a way to transform psynergy into hyle, we'd essentially be gods, able to mold and shape the world as we saw fit. Unfortunately, Nature doesn't seem to like the idea of humans being all-

powerful, so there are problems. You would need preposterous amounts of psynergy in order to create matter, and even more if you wanted to create life. Not to mention, you'd have to be utterly precise with these vast amounts of psynergy, making sure to balance them perfectly. I'd imagine," said Felix casually, "that if all of Weyard became Adepts, and you gathered all of their psynergy into one spot, you'd probably have enough to make a rock the size of your fist."

"...Damn....," said Garet, awed. He caught a glimpse of Ivan and saw that he had a confused look on his face.

"But then...how are we able to control matter the way we do? Shouldn't it take much more psynergy than we possess?" Ivan asked curiously.

"Well, we're not *creating* matter when we activate our psynergy," Felix said patiently. "Listen, when you use psynergy, you're merely stimulating the hyle contained within the matter. Think of psynergy as the strings, and the matter as the puppet. I can create earthquakes because the psynergy within me is able to react with any sort of Venusian material. This is also how you can detect when psynergy is being used by other Adepts. The psynergy within you is being stimulated in the same way...simple."

Felix stretched both of his arms over his head and arched his back, yawning loudly. He rubbed his ponytail as he continued, "As for your other question, the reason you can't detect the psynergy within the land is because it's not really psynergy. It's hyle. Every bit of matter has hyle from each of the four elements within it, with all four types being balanced in a perfect ratio. A rock has mostly Venus hyle within it, but it also has Mercury, Jupiter and Mars hyle within it. They're all bonded together in a specific pattern. It

would be something like five parts Venus hyle for every one part Mercury, Jupiter, Mars hyle. This is where the very advanced stuff starts, so I won't bore you with the gory details.

"Ok, then," Gareth said slowly, "but how exactly was the world created anyway? If everything is made of hyle, where'd it all come from?"

Felix raised an eyebrow and opened his mouth, but before he could speak the brass doorknob on the door behind Felix began to turn slowly. The three young men turned as the door crept open to reveal Isaac. His face was emotionless, but his demeanor foreshadowed some sort of dissonance within him. Isaac was noticeably agitated, yet his eyes were hard and emotionless.

"Uh, yo Isaac," Gareth said tentatively. "Looks like you finally woke up."

Isaac slightly nodded in his direction, and turned his focused gaze towards Ivan. "There's something I've got to ask you," he said simply.

Ivan's eyebrows rose, and he said with a tone of surprise, "Uh, ok. We can go in another room-"

Isaac shook his head. "No point. I'll just ask you now." Isaac strode towards Ivan and leaned on the table in front of him, so that their faces were only a couple feet apart. "Have you seen-well, *heard*-anything abnormal lately?"

Ivan stared blankly, so Isaac elaborated. "You know, like...a telekinetic message? Anything of that sort?"

Ivan closed his agape mouth and swallowed. "Well...yeah, I believe someone did project a mental message the other

day. I could tell it used a lot of energy, but it only reached me as a sort of echo, so it was probably an Adept from far away."

Isaac's voice dropped to a dire tone. "Were the words anything like 'It has begun'?"

Surprise emerged from Ivan's soft features. "Woah, yeah, that was exactly it. How'd you know? I didn't know Venus adepts were that in-tune with mental abilities."

Isaac stood up slowly. He was still looking at Ivan, but his mind was far away.

"Hey, Isaac..." Gareth started cautiously, "What's wrong? You're acting weird...like you just found out Vault's gonna be attacked, or something." Gareth laughed nervously, and when Isaac didn't respond, he added quietly, "We're not getting attacked, are we?"

"Garet." Isaac's voice was sturdy. "I need you to get everyone. All eight of us, and Kraden. Bring them to the sanctum."

"Alright, I guess. For what though?"

"Just do it," Isaac said curtly. "I need to have everyone gathered there in the next hour. There's something all of you need to know." Isaac then spun on his heel and purposefully walked back out, gently easing the door closed behind him.

"The...hell?" Gareth said. "What's up with him? I haven't seen him like that in ages."

Felix stood up quickly. "There's something wrong. I don't know, but I'm inclined to believe that it has something to do with the Lighthouses."

"Hey, that's a huge assumption," Ivan said pointedly. "For all we know, it could be a personal issue, or perhaps related to Vale's rebuilding."

Garet shook his head as he also rose to his feet. "No way... Isaac's not the type to tell other people about his problems."

"And if it involved Vale, why ask Kraden to be present also? He's not a warrior," Felix said. "No, this is something more universal, something that threatens us all..."

Garet swallowed. There had been no sign of danger other than Isaac's ominous appearance, but he still felt nervous, even more nervous than he did in the moments before he and the others reached the Mars Lighthouse Aerie. It probably had something to do with Isaac's own behavior. He was the fearless leader, and he was showing everything but confidence. Garet was shaken, but he comforted himself with the knowledge that, even though they returned mere days ago, they would be at full-strength, with all eight of the Adepts prepared to battle.

Isaac sat in the sanctum, impatiently rapping his fingers against the podium at its apex. It had been an hour and ten minutes, and no one had shown up. He had expected Felix to show up early and interrogate him to find out the purpose behind the meeting, but it had been only Isaac and the cold sanctum seats for over an hour. He was seriously considering starting an earthquake to get their attention, when the sanctum door burst open with such ferocity that Isaac found himself reaching for the hilt of the Sol Blade on his back.

All seven Adepts strode up to the podium. Jenna was in front, looking angry. Her hair bounced with each powerful stride, and Isaac could envision sparks flying from her eyes.

Felix was behind her, looking bemused, but he had the same purposeful stride as Jenna. Garet, Ivan, Mia, Sheba, and Piers followed them, seemingly in the middle of a discussion.

"Ok, Isaac, you'd better spill the beans," Jenna said sharply. "I was in the middle of something when Garet practically dragged me here."

"Sorry, man," Garet said apologetically. "It took me forever to convince her to show up."

Isaac nodded and stepped down from the podium. "I'm sorry I had to hold this meeting on such short notice, but I wanted to get it done before you guys left," Isaac said, looking at Mia and Piers.

"Oh, it's ok," Mia said cheerfully. "Imil will be fine, regardless of how long I take. The healing waters have basically put me out of a job, anyway."

Piers shrugged. "I'm in no rush, either. I was exiled from Lemuria, so there's no guarantee that I'll even be allowed to return. "

There was an expectant silence as they waited for Isaac to speak. He began to pace thoughtfully, as he wondered the best way to introduce the news to his companions. Telling them would be extraordinarily difficult, as he knew their instinct would be to reject the quest. But, what alternative did they have?

Just as Isaac began to speak, however, a bright golden light blanketed the room, as if an invisible sun was brought forth from nothing. The light was accompanied by a high-pitched shimmering sound.

"The hell is going on?" Gareth exclaimed. The other Adepts also began to shout and question Isaac, but their cries stopped when the golden light increased in intensity until it became blinding white. After a fleeting moment, the light seemed to evaporate. Isaac let his eyes adjust, and his gaze rested upon the large, rocky figure of the Wise One.

Jenna gasped. "It's you! The Wise One!"

The other Adepts shouted other interjections, and the Wise One blinked slowly.

"Isaac did well summoning you all here," it said in its amazing voice. It wasn't baritone, alto, or soprano, but some mixture of the three. "But there is no time. There is one final quest you all must engage in, and there is far more peril than your last."

The Wise One paused, seemingly expecting someone to object, but there was silence. It nodded slightly, and continued.

"The Anemos. I'm sure you all remember from your studies, as well as your visit to Contigo. They are planning a return."

A visible ripple of surprise flowed through the group of Adepts.

"The hell? That's...bu-what?" Gareth stuttered. "I thought they're supposed to be in the sky, or something!"

"You are correct, and it was so for hundreds of years. But recently, they've made their presence known once more, and they intend to return. They will undoubtedly want vengeance."

"Vengeance?" Sheba said quizzically. "For what?"

The Wise One floated silently, and said, with what appeared to be discomfort, "Isaac shall elaborate. My power wanes, and I must give you instruction. Your duty is to prevent the six Anemos from obtaining the Shaman's Rod from Moapa in Shaman Village. I must stress to you, defeating them there will be the most arduous task of your lives."

The Adepts were shocked, and The Wise One seemed to misinterpret their silence as acceptance.

"Very well. I shall take my leave. May Venus, Mars, Jupiter, and Mercury be with you."

A blinding flash, and The Wise One was gone.

There was more silence, then Felix spoke softly, "When did you find out about this, Isaac?"

"He came to me in a dream last night. I came to you guys as soon as I woke up," Isaac replied, even more softly.

Garet grinned nervously and said, "So, it IS a he...that answers one of my questions." He chuckled, but stopped when he noticed that no one else was laughing. Everyone was enveloped in their own thoughts, looks of distress and dismay upon all of their faces.

A single tear dropped from Jenna's cheek. Isaac awoke from his reverie and took a step towards Jenna, but she promptly spun around and stormed out of the sanctum, with even more emotion than she showed when she first entered. Felix departed after her, casting a sidelong glance at Isaac that seemed to say *I hope you know what you're doing*.

"So...the eight heroes must embark on another quest to save the world," Piers said.

"Mercury, there's just no rest for us, is there?" Mia said, frustration evident in every word.

"Well," Sheba replied, "at least we'll all be together. I mean, between the eight of us, how can we be beaten?"

"Agreed...I don't really feel scared. I mean, after lighting the Lighthouses, what else in Weyard can challenge us, honestly?" Ivan said.

Isaac remained quiet. He took a seat on one of the benches and buried his face in his hands. Gareth approached him and rested his hand on his shoulder.

"Hey, man...why so glum? We're here with you, remember?"

"I feel terrible," Isaac said, his voice muffled. "My parents haven't even been able to enjoy being together even for a week, and we've got to go back out on this...adventure. I just feel...I don't know," Isaac said resignedly.

"Hey," Gareth said, "we accepted this responsibility when we went into Sol Sanctum. If we don't take care of it, no one will. Sometimes...things get thrown at you. A weak man complains 'Why me?' but a strong man says, 'Show me the bastard who threw this, so I can skin him'.

A smile tugged at Isaac's lips, and he looked up at Gareth, who was wearing his trademark wide grin.

"What'd you do, get that out of a book of proverbs?" Isaac said, standing up.

"Nah, I just thought of it. The best ideas come at spontaneous moments, you know?"

"Well," Isaac said, rubbing his chin, "let's hope this moment is spontaneous enough for one to come right now..."